

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO CINCPAC

S E C R E T STATE 032987

EXDIS, MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE FROM VIENTIANE FEB 13

QUOTE S E C R E T VIENTIANE 1024

EXDIS

DEPT PASS CINCPAC AND SECDEF

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MCAP, MASS, PGOV, LA

SUBJECT: TALK WITH DEFENSE MINISTER SISOUK NA CHAMPASSAK

1. TO OUR ASTONISHMENT, DEFMIN SISOUK AND FINMIN NGON SANANIKONE WERE IN LUANG PRABANG ON 10 AND 11 FEBRUARY FOR TALKS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. GENERAL ROUND AND I MET WITH SISOUK THIS MORNING AND ALTHOUGH HE WAS HURRIED AND UNCOMMUNICATIVE, WE GAINED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION.

2. SISOUK SAID THE PRIME MINISTER WAS NOT A BIT STUBBORN OR UNREASONABLE WITH REGARD TO THE SUBSIDY OF 50 MILLION KIP A MONTH WHICH HE HAS DIRECTED BE GIVEN TO THE PATHET LAO. THE PRIME MINISTER UNDERSTOOD SISOUK'S CONCERN REGARDING THE PROBABLE RAMIFICATIONS OF THIS ACTION AND TOLD SISOUK AND NGON THAT THE SUM COULD BE DIMINISHED AS THEY SAW FIT IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT PARITY

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BETWEEN FAR AND PL SALARIES. SISOUK SAID THAT HE

SUBSEQUENTLY FOUND OUT FROM NGON THAT THE LATTER HAD ALREADY TRANSMITTED 50 MILLION KIP TO THE PATHET LAO AND HE SAID THAT HE WAS FURIOUS WITH NGON, WHOM HE CHARACTERIZED AS STUPID AND LAZY. ALTHOUGH THE PRIME MINISTER'S REVISED POSITION GIVES HOPE FOR FINDING SOME SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM, THE FACT THAT NGON HAS ALREADY MADE THE FIRST PAYMENT MAKES IT HARD FOR THE VIENTIANE SIDE TO NEGOTIATE A NEW ARRANGEMENT. SISOUK SEEMED AT LOSS AT HOW BEST TO PROCEED.

3. ON THE SUBJECT OF RISING THE COST OF POL TO LAO CONSUMERS AND MAINTAINING THE EXISTING TAX STRUCTURE, THE PRIME MINISTER WAS ALSO VERY FORTHCOMING. HE AGREED WITH SISOUK AND NGON THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT ACCEPT THIS LOSS OF REVENUE AND AUTHORIZED THEM TO PROCEED WITH RAISING THE POL PRICE.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH WE DID NOT ALLUDE TO OUR INNUMERABLE SUGGESTIONS THAT THE VIENTIANE SIDE MAKE AN EFFORT TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, THIS EPISODE CONFIRMS OUR VIEW THAT THE LATTER WILL ACT RESPONSIBLY PROVIDED ALL ASPECTS OF A PROBLEM ARE BROUGHT TO HIS ATTENTION. SISOUK INFORMED US THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL BE RETURNING TO VIENTIANE FEBRUARY 20 SO THIS LACK OF COORDINATION BETWEEN THE VIENTIANE SIDE WITH HIM WILL OBVIOUSLY BECOME A THING OF THE PAST.
WHITEHOUSE
UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

SECRET

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